

Interview with Magda Jensen Rutters
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Begin Tape 1, Side 1

PL: Introduction

Would you tell me about your grandparents?

Rutters: My grandparents were in Denmark, Peter Rasmussen was my Mother's father, and Jans Jensen was my Father's father. They lived in Mun, the Island of Mun. My Dad came over here when he was 9 years old. Later he made a trip to Denmark and that was when he met my Mother. He brought her over to Boston but they had the White Slave Trade and they would not let her land unless they got married. She did not speak English. Dad had all the papers so they were married in Boston, Mass. They had baked beans for the wedding. They lived in Minnesota.

PL: Why did your Father come to America at that early age?

Rutters: He came with his father, brother and sister and they settled in Minnesota, in a Danish community there. Farming. His health was poor so he went to Texas, but then returned to Minnesota. Such cold winters, the doctors told him to move west to a warmer climate. And that was at the time that Solvang was being settled, so he came to Solvang. My parents came to Solvang in June 1911 and I was born the following May. My Dad had to ride over to Santa Ynez for the doctor, as we had no doctor at that time in Solvang. It was Dr. Luton.

We had no paved streets then, only dirt, and we did our trading in Los Olivos, at the Davis Store. My Dad would collect eggs and trade for groceries at the store. There was a show house there and when I got older my Mother would take me over to see a silent movie. Alice Jorgensen was my girl friend. Her uncle was the one who ran the Coop Store in Solvang. There was no grocery store then in early Solvang, before Nielsen's.

- PL: Why did your parents go to Fredendborg Canyon to settle?
- Rutters: This was all part of Solvang and they chose that property. They came in on the narrow gauge railroad. The property had 98 acres and they chose to buy from Campalias. A part of the property had to be donated to Atterdag Canyon and then some was sold to build on to the Recovery Residence. The part my Dad farmed is now called Viking Hills behind the Solvang Cemetery, it goes up but then way back and is flat. He raised wheat, beans, and corn. We had a few cows for butter and cream. Later we got a separator to get the cream from the milk. Knudsens Cremery came from Santa Maria and would pick it up. That was the really early years before a creamery was started in Solvang.
- PL: Were your parents happy here?
- Rutters: Yes, my Dad's health improved and my Mother was happy for the first time since coming from her home in Denmark. Minnesota and Colorado were not so good. They were supposed to go back to Denmark for her parents golden wedding but the war broke out and they could not go. They never did go back to Denmark.
- PL: Did you have brothers and sisters?
- Rutters: I have 3 brothers and 2 sisters. Wagner Jensen lives in Solvang, Sylvia Dudley lives in Lompoc, Haker Jensen lives in Tarzana, Bernhart Jensen lived in Manchester, and Heidi Orr lives in Klamath Falls, Oregon.
- PL: It is said you are the first child born in the new community of Solvang that stayed?
- Rutters: Yes, I was born May 10, 1912. I started school at 6, When I graduated from 8th grade there were 4 of us in the class. The teacher was Mrs. Christine Burchardi Jensen, she taught 4 grades. I walked to school rain or shine, if you got wet you could sit by the stove and dry out. The school is where Denmark Square is now.
- PL: Tell me about Atterdag College?
- Rutters: I liked going there, it was our only activity really. Young peoples meetings on Sunday nights. Gym once a week, and dancing once a week. Everything was held in

- the gym at Atterdag. Music was played on an accordion. Church was there too, Sunday School was first.
- PL: Did you take any classes at Atterdag?
- Rutters: One summer, it was mostly Danish classes. I could not speak English when I started school, many of us could not. We passed the first grade nicely, it does not take long. When I was 21 I visited Denmark and stayed three months so I can speak and write Danish. It was a tour of Europe.
- PL: I suppose your Mother could have gone with you to Europe?
- Rutters: No, she still have small children at home, I was 15 when my youngest sister was born. We did not consider 6 a big family. I always cleaned house on Saturdays. I was a book-worm, and I would bring my books along, and read as I would work. It took awhile. We had wood stoves and the boys brought in the wood.
- PL: Tell me about some of your friends who are still here today?
- Rutters: Monica Kramer, Ester Isaacsen, on Santa Rosa Road, were my classmates. The Larsens who lived on the hill and Norma Hansen. She and I always walked to Sunday School together.
- PL: After 8th grade, did you go on to high school?
- Rutters: Yes, and I graduated in 1930. Chemistry was my favorite class. We had a lab, Mr. Weston was Principal. We had a bus to take us to high school and it stopped in the park for us. Jack Ross was our bus driver. My parents lived in Fredensborg Canyon for many years then they moved to Ballard Fields for a short time, and they came into town to this house that I now live in.
- PL: After high school what did you do?
- Rutters: I clerked in a bakery for 3 years, the Ekenrodes Bakery. Joan Skytt is one of the Ekenrodes daughters. Then I worked for the Taft Family on Alamo Pintado Rd. Mrs. Taft became Mrs. Gleason, Ellen Gleason. I was her cook from 1933 to 36, and lived out there. Olga Klebo was the nurse maid. Vennesa Taft was a class-

mated to my sister. The Tafts little boy was born later.

PL: How did you meet Mr. Rutters?

Rutters: When I came back from Denmark, he had my job at the bakery. He was from Pennsylvania, and it was hard times. It was easier for a girl to find a job, so I went to work at the Solvang Hotel. He came here as his cousin had the bakery, the Ekenrodes. He came to see if he could make it. We were married in 1936 and we had known each other for three years before. He was a good carpenter. We were married at Bethany Lutheran Church with about 20 people in attendance. We came to this home for a short time and then rented a house for 20 dollars a month. Then we bought this lot from my Dad for \$250. First we built one room and between the tree was our toilet. In two piano boxes we stored all our groceries. When it rained the sugar got wet. There was nothing around us until the grammar school was built just north of here. Our son, Norman was born in 1940. He now lives in Morro Bay. We had just one child. That very morning I had gone out to vote for President Roosevelt and the baby came at 5 p.m. Norman Leo. He has two girls Charlotte Ann Rutters and Tammie Lynn Rutters.

PL: You told me you enjoyed reading very much?

Rutters: Yes, and its a good way of not getting lonesome. We had a library and the man who ran it was named Sink, next to where the drug store is now. Mr. Sink had a clothing store. Other than reading we would climb hills and visit friends and it was not hard to keep entertained.

PL: Do you remember any exciting events in Solvang?

Rutters: When the Prince and Princess of Denmark visited, that was exciting, we had a ceremony at Atterdag College and later Princess Margarth came.

I nw help at the Thrift Shop in Buellton. Five days a week I help at the Senior Center in Solvang. We have 30 to 40 people coming for lunches now.

PL: Has it been a good life for you?

Rutters: Yes, I would say so. We all have our problems along

along the line but I think I lived in the good, hard, old days. What do I think of Solvang of today? In one sense we are proud of Solvang, but on the other hand, we to to church and market but as far as the stores and shops, I don't go.

PL: Thank you Mrs. Rutters, for this interview.